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Giant Quake Hits Near Japan Coast

TOKYO (UPI) — A giant earthquake struck near the northeastern Japanese coast yesterday, causing small tidal waves on the islands of Hokkaido and Honshu. Preliminary reports indicated there was no damage or injuries.

In Washington, the National Earthquake Information Center said the tremor measured 9.3 on the Richter scale, equal in strength to both the San Francisco quake of 1906 and the "Good Friday" Alaska quake of 1964. A spokesman said the quake was centered on the island of Iturup in the Kurile Island chain, 750 miles northeast of Tokyo.

Perfectual police in Japan's northern region said the quake was felt in wide areas of Hokkaido, Japan's northern island off Siberia, and Honshu, the nation's largest island.

The meteorological agency in Tokyo registered the quake on its seismographs at 6:27 a.m. local time at a magnitude of 7.7 on the Richter scale.

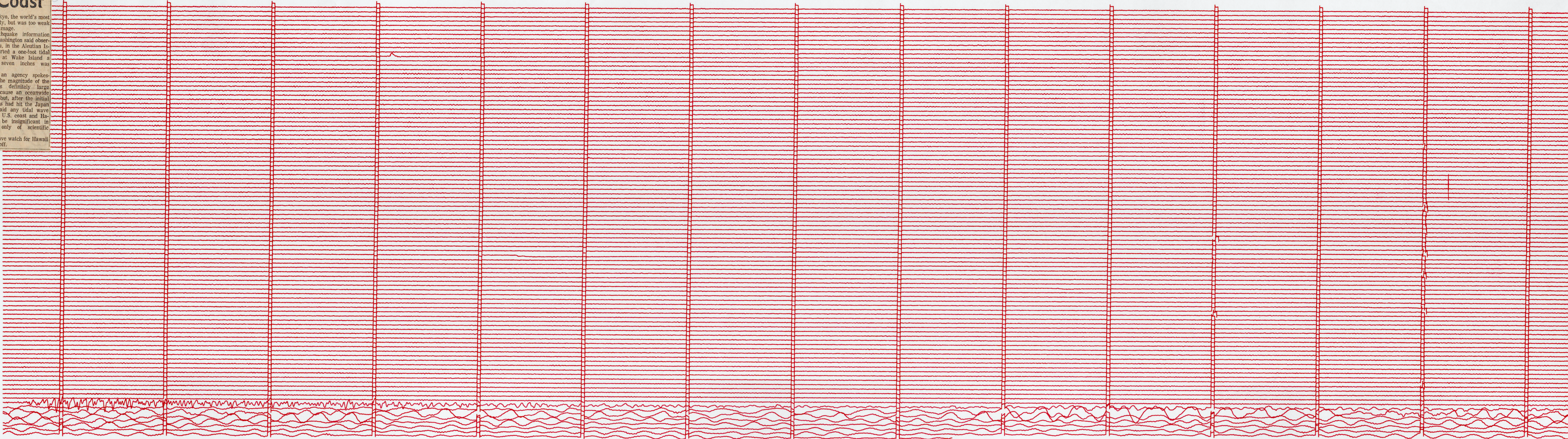
Tidal waves of about one foot in height hit northeast coastal regions near low tide about two hours after dawn.

The earthquake was felt in parts of Tokyo, the world's most populous city, but was too weak to cause damage.

The earthquake information center in Washington said observers in Adtu, in the Aleutian Islands, reported a one-foot tidal wave and at Wake Island a wave of seven inches was measured.

Earlier, an agency spokesman said the magnitude of the quake was definitely large enough to cause an oceanwide tidal wave but, after the initial small waves had hit the Japan area, he said any tidal wave against the U.S. coast and Hawaii "will be insignificant in size and only of scientific interest."

A tidal wave watch for Hawaii was called off.



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